

BOROUGH OF BRECONAnnual Report of the Medical Officer of Health.

1940.

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

I beg to present my annual report for the year 1940. In accordance with the wishes of the Welsh Board of Health, as expressed in Circular 2314 (Wales), this report must again be considered to be an interim one and is confined to essential and urgent matters which have affected the public health during the year.

At the end of the war a report will be made dealing more fully with the period from the beginning of 1939 to the end of the last complete year.

Medical Officer of Health.

Dr. D. J. Jones, the first full time Medical Officer of Health to the Borough, terminated his appointment on December 31st, 1939, to take up similar duties elsewhere.

This created a vacancy which I had the honour of filling on March 1st, 1940.

Sanitary Inspector.

During the first half of the year Mr. Jinks, the Borough Sanitary Inspector, left the district to take up military duties.

On May 1st, 1940, this vacancy was filled by Mr. H. G. Price, a fully qualified sanitary inspector who also holds his meat certificate. Mr. Price was appointed in a temporary capacity for the duration of the war.

Water Supply.

During the first nine months of this year the water supply to the upper reaches of the Borough was not satisfactory.

This was largely due to an unfortunate combination of circumstances such as the very severe weather, which caused a large number of leaks, followed by a period of exceptionally dry weather and, lastly, the military authorities pumped water to a camp for a considerable time.

This led to the supply being restricted for approximately a fortnight during September, 1940.

All the men employed on the water works were tested to ensure their freedom from enteric infection. This, in future, will be done as a routine.

The shortage of water in the upper reaches was also partially caused by the increased population due to evacuees, soldiers and soldiers' families.

Slaughter House.

The Borough slaughter house was taken over by the Ministry of Food in January 1940 and from then onwards became a Government Controlled Slaughter House.

This has in no way interfered with the routine inspection of meat by the sanitary inspector but the amount of meat to be inspected is now very much more than in pre-war days.

Borough of Brecon.

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Evacuation.

The Borough became a reception area in June 1940 and during the year a large number of unaccompanied children and also mothers and children were admitted into the town. The official parties were received from London whilst, in addition, numbers of unofficial evacuees arrived from here and also other evacuation areas.

In all approximately 1000 persons entered the Borough and apart from the fact, previously mentioned, that this increased number contributed to some extent to the difficulty in the water supply, the health of the Borough, taken as a whole did not suffer.

A large house was requisitioned near the Borough for the reception of children suffering from ailments rendering them temporarily difficult to billet. This house is proving extremely useful and is now serving as a Sick Bay for the whole of the County.

The large amount of extra work as chief billoting officer is being undertaken by the sanitary inspector and this most difficult work is being carried out in a highly satisfactory manner.

Very few of the mothers and children evacuated from Liverpool to the Borough late in 1939 now remain here and it is to be regretted, from the point of view of their health and safety, that they felt forced to return to their homes.

Infectious Disease.

There was no severe outbreak of infectious disease in the Borough during the year. The actual number of cases notified to me is as follows:-

Scarlet Fever.....	11 cases.
Cerebro-Spinal Fever.....	4 cases.
Diphtheria.....	5 cases.
Puerperal Fever.....	1 case.
Acute Primary Pneumonia.....	1 case.
Measles.....	10 cases.
Erysipelas.....	2 cases.
Pertussis.....	1 case.

These cases were more or less spread throughout the year.

Some difficulty was experienced in obtaining a suitable vehicle for the conveyance of infectious disease patients to the Borough Isolation Hospital. Because of this and also because of the expense involved in opening this hospital for an occasional case, arrangements were made during the year for the admission of such patients to Merthyr Isolation Hospital. The Borough Hospital would have been opened if a severe outbreak occurred. Fortunately this necessity did not arise. The Borough Hospital was therefore closed on 11th April and has remained closed since.

No exceptional administrative measures were taken or recommended by me during the year.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

T.C.R. GEORGE.

District Medical Officer of Health.

